

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROVIDES HOUSING FOR HURRICANE VICTIMS



Mary Lou Richard, Rural Development Manager in the Rolla local office is shown here with Mary Wyatt, Katrina evacuee.

At the direction of President Bush, USDA Secretary Mike Johanns and Undersecretary, Thomas Dorr, USDA Rural Development is providing housing across the nation for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. In Missouri, Rural Development has apartments across the state to help the victims with housing. A list of available apartments has been provided to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Missouri Governor Matt Blunt through (State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) and the American Red Cross offices in Missouri.

As part of this effort Mary Wyatt and her three children moved in to the Brookview Apartments Multi-family Housing complex in Waynesville.

The family formerly of Mississippi lost their home due to the destruction of hurricane Katrina. As displaced residents the Wyatt family is benefiting from one of the USDA programs recently announced by

Secretary Johanns to further meet the food and housing needs of Hurricane Katrina survivors.

“Our hearts go out to the Wyatt family,” said Greg Branum, Missouri State Director for USDA Rural Development. “It is hard to imagine what they have experienced. As they start to recover and rebuild their lives, Rural Development is assisting with a place to live.”

Mary Wyatt said, “We are happy to have a roof over our heads, and if things work out for us here we would like to make this our permanent home. Thanks to all that helped us find this place to live.”

Branum added that thanks are extended to the local Red Cross and FEMA staff and the Brookview Apartments staff for assisting in arranging the housing for the Wyatt family.

Rural Development in Missouri has one of the largest multi-family programs across the nation with approximately 850 complexes and 19,000 rental units. Due to normal turnover there are several vacant apartments located across the state. USDA Rural Development is coordinating with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and American Red Cross, plus faith-based organizations to match residents left homeless by Hurricane Katrina with these apartments. Eligibility requirements associated with the rural housing program are being waived to expedite the relocation process.

USDA's Rural Development also has designated a toll free number to assist homeowners, renters and others in need of housing assistance. The toll-free number is 1-800-414-1226. Information also is available on the USDA web site at: <http://www.usda.gov/usdakatrina.xml>. George Thomas, Public Information Coordinator, for Missouri Rural Development is serving as the point of contact for inquiries regarding housing assistance of the Rural Development financed apartments and can be reached at 573-876-9326.

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